

Civic Education Program (CFDA No. 84.929F)¹

I. Legislation

Part F of Title X of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 8141) (expires September 30, 1999). The statute authorizes a noncompetitive grant to the nonprofit Center for Civic Education in Calabasas, California.

II. Funding History

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>
1992	\$4,463,000
1993	4,346,000
1994	4,463,000
1995	4,463,000
1996	4,000,000

III. Analysis of Program Performance

A. Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this program is to support instruction on the history and principles of democracy in the United States, with a particular focus on the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

B. Strategies to Achieve the Goals

Services Supported

The program provides teacher training and curriculum materials for upper elementary, middle, and high school students. The curriculum, titled *We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution*, seeks to promote civic competence and responsibility among students, including support for the constitutional rights and civil liberties of dissenting individuals and groups. For upper elementary and secondary students, the program also provides simulated congressional hearings that give the students the opportunity to show their understanding of the basic principles of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. For secondary students, these hearings culminate in a national competition and celebration in Washington, D.C., where the winning class from each state and their teachers participate and visit members of Congress.

¹Beginning in FY97, the CFDA Number for this program will be changed to 84.929.

C. Program Performance—Indicators of Impact and Effectiveness

In 1996, 2.5 million students participated in the program. Since its founding in 1987, more than 20 million students and 70,000 teachers have participated (V.1).

A 1994 study of program participants by Richard Brody of Stanford University measured political tolerance, that is, respect for the civil liberties and political rights of all people in a society, including those whose ideas are distasteful or abhorrent to the majority. Brody surveyed 1,351 high school students nationwide to compare program participants with students in other civics, government, and history classes; and the survey used items that allowed comparisons with previous surveys of the general adult population. Brody found that not only are high school civics, government, and American history students more politically tolerant than the average American, but that program participants are more tolerant than students following other curricula. The study concludes that the “We the People” program fosters increased tolerance because it promotes greater self-confidence and the perception of fewer limits on students’ own political freedom (V.2).

Earlier studies by Educational Testing Service (ETS) concluded that the program achieved its major instructional goal of increasing students' knowledge of the Constitution and Bill of Rights (V.3, V.4).

IV. Planned Studies

None.

V. Sources of Information

1. Program files.
2. R. Brody, Secondary Education and Political Attitudes: Examining the Effects on Political Tolerance of the *We the People* Curriculum (Calabasas, CA: Stanford University Center for Civic Education, 1994).
3. Educational Testing Service, An Evaluation of the Instructional Effects of the National Bicentennial Competition on the Constitution and Bill of Rights. (Pasadena, CA: Author, 1994).
4. Educational Testing Service, An Evaluation of the Instructional Impact of the Elementary and Middle School Curricular Materials Developed for the National Bicentennial Competition on the Constitution and Bill of Rights (Pasadena, CA: Author, 1991).

VI. Contacts for Further Information

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